

[18] two large branches of Cape Fear river, by which means all commodities from the southern and middle parts of the province centre there; consequently it is, of late, become a place of elegance and wealth: there are many eminent merchants there, and much shipping from the neighbouring colonies, from the West Indies and Britain; so that, for commerce, and a well furnished market of all necessaries, it is at present reckoned the most flourishing, and is still greatly increasing. Here the river is as broad as the Thames at London. The north-west branch of this river, along which I travelled, is navigable about 40 miles above Wilmington for large vessels; but long boats, lighters, and large canoes, carry goods for above 100 miles farther up. On this north-west branch of the same river, lies Cross Creek, or New Campbelltown, about 100 miles distant from Wilmington in the course of the river. This town is situated in Cumberland county, and the inhabitants mostly Highlanders, emigrants from Argyleshire, and the western isles, are settled in said county. The land, in general, along the sea coast, is light and sandy, and promises little in appearance to a stranger; it is, however, of a generous nature, and helped by a kindly sun, yields corn and tobacco extremely well, and, when flooded, yield rice plentifully. But, along the sides of rivers and creeks, there is a fine black mold, and rich soil, for about a mile and a half back from either bank of the river, which, without manure, returns plentifully whatever is committed to it. This good soil spreads still wider, and improves continually, as you advance into the country, and then it is uniformly good and fertile for immense tracts of land. The whole country is in a manner one forest, where our planters have not cleared it. And at a 100 miles from the sea, where it begins to grow hilly, and mixed with rising grounds, [19] the soil is of an amazing fertility, fitted for every purpose of human life. Nor can any thing be imagined more pleasant to the eye; than the variegated appearance of this back country. The air is here pure and wholesome, and the heat in summer much more temperate than on the flat sandy coast. It is diversified in the most agreeable manner, with arable lands, meadows, and woods; here and there appear rising hills; and its forests abound with excellent timber, such as oak of several sorts, cyprus, hickory, the pine, the walnut, the ash, the poplar, the beech, the elm, the sycamore, the laurel, the bay, the gum, and the mulberry, with many others not mentioned. This